



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH PRESS RELEASE

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein M.D., Secretary

Office of Communications

*Karen Black
410-767-6490*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Recent heat wave claims first victims of the year Precautions urged as temperatures expected to rise this week Extreme heat predicted for Wednesday and Thursday in Central Maryland Affected jurisdictions will consider activating their heat response plans

BALTIMORE, MD (June 7, 2011) – The recent heat wave has contributed to the first 2011 heat-related deaths in Maryland, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) has announced. Two senior residents, aged 65 or older, died in the past ten days from excess heat exposure. Both of the affected residents, a Cecil County man and an Anne Arundel County woman, had underlying medical conditions. More high temperatures are expected for Wednesday and Thursday in the Central Maryland region.

“When hot weather claims the lives of our residents, we are reminded how important it is to take precautions against heat exposure,” said Governor Martin O’Malley. “We need to remember to check on our families, friends and neighbors and especially those who are most vulnerable.”

DHMH cautions Maryland citizens that **heatstroke** and **heat exhaustion** can develop from the hot and humid conditions typically associated with Maryland summers.

"Extreme heat can be deadly, said DHMH Secretary Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D.
“Everyone should review the warning signs of danger.”

Marylanders in need of a cooling center or assistance can contact their Local Health Department for information by phone or the internet or by going to the DHMH Heat Related Illness web page at: <http://www.dhmh.maryland.gov/diseases/heatrelated.html>.

Heatstroke is a serious illness characterized by a body temperature greater than 105 degrees. Symptoms may include dry red skin, convulsions, disorientation, delirium and coma. Onset of heatstroke can be rapid: a person can go from feeling apparently well to a seriously ill condition within minutes. Treatment of heatstroke involves the rapid lowering of body temperature, using a cool bath or wet towels. A heatstroke victim should be kept in a cool area; emergency medical care should be obtained by dialing 911.

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heatstroke that may develop due to a combination of several days with high temperatures and dehydration in an individual. Signs of heat

exhaustion include extreme weakness, muscle cramps, nausea, or headache. Victims may also vomit or faint. Heat exhaustion is treated with plenty of liquids and rest in a cool, shaded area. Those on a low-sodium diet or with other health problems should contact a doctor.

Hot weather tips:

- Drink plenty of fluids such as water and fruit juices to prevent dehydration -- be aware that alcohol can impair the body's sweat mechanism, as can fairly common medications such as antihistamines and diuretics;
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothes;
- Avoid direct sunlight by staying in the shade or by wearing sunscreen, a hat and sunglasses;
- When possible, stay in air-conditioned areas. If your home is not air-conditioned, consider a visit to a shopping mall or public library. Contact your local health department to see if there are cooling shelters open in your area;
- NEVER leave pets or young children in a car, even with the windows cracked;
- Check on elderly relatives or neighbors at least daily; and
- Take it easy when outdoors. Athletes and those who work outdoors should take short breaks when feeling fatigued. Schedule physical activity during the morning or evening when it is cooler.

In 2010, there were 32 confirmed heat-related deaths; in 2009, six heat related deaths; in 2008, 17; and in 2007, 21.

DHMH is making available brochure on protecting yourself in the heat at
http://www.dhmh.maryland.gov/diseases/pdf/Heat_Emergency_Brochure_050611_1.pdf

Information in Spanish is also available at
http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/factsheets/itdhpfehe/itdhpfehe_spanish_100-F-08-076.pdf

For more information visit (Including Spanish language websites):

- Maryland Emergency Management Agency:
http://www.mema.state.md.us/MEMA/content_page.jsp?TOPICID=othernds
- Federal Emergency Management Agency:
<http://www.fema.gov/hazard/heat/index.shtm>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/>
 - CDC Spanish Translation: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/es/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/>
- Additional Spanish Language Resources:
http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/factsheets/itdhpfehe/itdhpfehe_spanish_100-F-08-076.pdf
http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/posters/beat-the-heat_poster_spanish_100-H-07-002.pdf